

CTD
Coalition of Texans with Disabilities
316 W. 12th Street, Ste. 405
Austin, TX 78701
512. 478.3366
Fax 512. 478.3370
www.cotwd.org

Chairman Julius Genachowski
Commissioner Meredith Attwell Baker
Commissioner Mignon Clyburn
Commissioner Michael J. Copps
Commissioner Robert M. McDowell
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

RE: Broadband Industry Practices (WC Docket No. 07-52)

October 14, 2009

Dear Commissioners:

We applaud your efforts to gather information, seek data, and listen to varying opinions throughout the creation of the National Broadband Plan. As director of the Coalition of Texans with Disabilities, I am particularly grateful for the attention you have devoted to people with disabilities. We are glad that you have recognized the importance of increasing broadband access for our community, as evidenced by your identification of Americans with disabilities as a group with a particularly low broadband adoption rate.


However, we are concerned by the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking on net neutrality at your upcoming October meeting. We fear that the consequences of these regulations could raise prices and deter further broadband adoption. People with disabilities are the demographic group with the lowest income in our society and would be disproportionately affected by a high broadband cost. How underproductive it would be to achieve universal broadband but leave it unaffordable for those who can reach the greatest upside with this technology. At this time, policies that detract from adoption, rather than promoting it, should be put aside. It is critical that the delivery of broadband technology to unserved Americans take precedence.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor recently released statistics that show that the unemployment rate for individuals with disabilities is nearly double that of adults with no disability. Those who work in the disability community know these statistics do not reflect the real discrepancy which is much higher. And that much higher rate does not count those who can't or don't want to work. Broadband technology can serve as an important tool in diminishing this trend, a key way to even the playing field. While many disabled Americans cannot drive or require in-home assistance, a home broadband adoption expands the workforce by enabling employees to

telecommute. Furthermore, broadband allows people with disabilities to enjoy the convenience and affordability of telemedicine and online education.

Given these benefits, it is clear that emerging public policy should work to deliver increased broadband to the disability community. There is too much at stake for the Commission to delay the goal of affordable universal broadband access any longer. Unfortunately, we fear that net neutrality will do just that. We urge you to consider the impact that such regulations would have on our community.

For A Barrier Free Society,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dennis Borel", with a stylized, flowing script.

Dennis Borel
Executive Director

CTD is a social and economic impact organization benefiting Texans with all disabilities of all ages.
CTD is a 501(c)3 membership organization controlled by people with disabilities.